

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USINT HAVANA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 055660

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CU

SUBJECT: PROTEST TO CUBA OVER AIRCRAFT INCIDENT

1. YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO PASS THE FOLLOWING NOTE TO THE
CUBAN AUTHORITIES:

2. BEGIN TEXT:

ON THE MORNING OF JAN. 17, 1978 ONE CUBAN MIG AIRCRAFT,
SIDE NUMBER 361 ENGAGED IN IRRESPONSIBLE, UNNECESSARILY
AGGRESSIVE, DANGEROUS MANEUVERS OVER INTERNATIONAL WATERS
AND IN INTERNATIONAL AIRSPACE WHICH THREATENED THE SAFETY
OF A UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AIRPLANE.

THE INCIDENT OCCURRED EAST OF HAVANA AT LATITUDE 21-58'N,
LONGITUDE 075-57'W COMMENCING AT 7:55 A.M. LOCAL TIME.
THE MIG-21 APPROACHED AN UNARMED UNITED STATES MILITARY
AIRCRAFT FROM THE SOUTH. MIG 361 MADE ONE HIGH SPEED PASS
APPROXIMATELY FIFTY TO ONE HUNDRED FEET IN FRONT OF THE
UNITED STATES AIRCRAFT PERPENDICULAR TO ITS TRACK. THE
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TACTICS EMPLOYED BY THE CUBAN INTERCEPT APPEARED TO BE MORE
AGGRESSIVE IN NATURE THAN PREVIOUSLY NOTED. THE US AIR-
CRAFT WAS FLYING AT AN ALTITUDE OF 4000 FT ON COURSE OF

115 T. THE CUBAN AIRCRAFT DEPARTED AT APPROXIMATELY 1100
AM LOCAL TIME.

THESE AGGRESSIVE AND DANGEROUS AIRCRAFT MANEUVERS TOOK PLACE MORE THAN 30 NM FROM THE CUBAN COASTLINE. THEY ARE CONSIDERED WELL IN EXCESS OF THAT WHICH IS REQUIRED TO SAFELY IDENTIFY AN AIRCRAFT.

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT WAS EXERCISING THE FREEDOM TO FLY IN INTERNATIONAL AIRSPACE OVER THE HIGH SEAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW.

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HEREBY PROTESTS IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THE ACTIONS OF THE CUBAN MIG AIRCRAFT. THESE ACTIONS WERE UNNECESSARILY AGGRESSIVE AND CONSTITUTED A HAZARD TO THE SAFE NAVIGATION OF THE AMERICAN AND CUBAN AIRCRAFT IN INTERNATIONAL AIRSPACE AND WERE IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS OF AVIATION SAFETY.

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER IT A DANGEROUS AND UNFRIENDLY ACT SHOULD SUCH AN INCIDENT RECUR AND WOULD HOLD THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA FULLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY FUTURE INCIDENTS IN WHICH US AIRCRAFT, TRANSITING INTERNATIONAL AIRSPACE, WERE THREATENED. END TEXT. VANCE

CHRISTOPHER

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